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BEHEMOTH

● Murtensee, Switzerland: Andreas Trottmann has send me a clipping on lake monsters in this Swiss lake close to Berne (which lies in the E) and Neuchatel (in the N) in the Swiss Jura. Called Lac du Morat in French, the lake is famous for water sports, has a size of 3 x 8 km, and a maximum depths of 50 m (average depth is 30m/100 ft). According to a letter to the editor of the "Berner Zeitung" (5 August 92), Max Mössinger from Gelterfingen was standing with two companions at Faoug, looking towards the lake, when all three suddenly noticed "four blue-black bodies aligned from west to east in the water. In order to see the strange objects with more detail, we used binoculars. What did we see? The four objects, with a flat rounded back, swam quite steadily in a regular distance from each other, creating waves with crowns of foam on their sides. But how big were the things? A boat in about half of the distance between us and the things helped. The lake monsters must have been in the region of 4.5 to 5.5 m (15-20ft). Before we had recovered from our surprise the four 'submarines' submured one after the other and disappered from view." The witnesses thought they had seen giant catfish. I note that submarine and lake monster is used nearly synonymously, and that an almost identical case in Central America was interpreted as submerged UFO (see Bilk 36). The most logical explanation is that the witnesses misinterpreted a wave effect or boat wake, which would exactly fit their report.

● Loch Ness: I have two "new" sightings from Loch Ness. The first is dated 1928, but was, for the first time, published by J D McDonald in his article "Why is Nessie still a mystery?", Scottish Field (Dec 1990,p.26-27). "One early morning in 1928, when /a companion of Macdonald/ (was) lifting his lines, he hauled in a curious creature which was two to three feet long and had a stumpy grey body and a vicious mouth. It bore no resemblance to any of the loch fish he knew so well...He was frightened to take it into the boat, and quickly cut the line". (credit: Andreas TRottmann) There have been several claims of young Nessies, one by Frank Searle, another one in one of Dinsdale's books I believe (schoolchildren see three little Nessies). Perhaps, if the 1928 story is factual (there have been a lot of pre-1930s stories which "resurfaced" recently), could it have been some marine fish stranded in the loch? When I read through the whole Inverness Courier years ago, I'd often found stories of lampreys and other sea creatures angled in the LOch. Nessletter 109, July 92,p.4, has a reference to a sighting of September 1991, when Hector MacDonald saw and photographed a large disturbance in the loch off Dores. For more details, see the Nessletter.

● Loch Ness: A large number of press accounts announced "Project Urquhart" in the German newspapers. All reports stressed that the Project was serious science and did not intend to find a monster. Most of their research programmes involved small loch creatures, the sediment layer at the loch bottom, sonar work and other limnological research. David Hepple from Edinburgh University said his special interest was in still undiscovered freshwater mulluscs. He was also talking about a secret connecting tunnel between the Loch and the North Sea! (Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung, 19 June). Mid-July, the search was on for one week, new reports came in, mainly repeating the initial reports. Mr CHalmers, head of the British Museum, emphasized again and again they were not after a monster, but "we want to understand what happens in a lake". (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 15 July, p.7). Prof. Gwynfryn Jones of the Institute for Freshwater Biology was sure new species of bacteria were waiting to be discovered "although these discoveries will not hit the headlines!" The Arab News (13 July, p.16) quoted Gwynfryn with the words the expedition were "one of the most exiting investigations in recent years". He expressed the hope of finding new species of nematodes - "spindle-shaped colorless worms (which) usually grow to no more than 3 millimetres in length." Most press reports referred to Nessie, the FAZ of July 15 to Andrew MacKillop, 84-year-old monk at Fort Augustus, who

saw the monster in 1961, when a long neck with a small head surfaced in front of him, allowing the monster to be identified as a plesiosaur. McKillop claims there have been 3000 - 4000 trustworthy witnesses in the last 70 years, a figure based on claims by Constance Whyte in the 1950s, never shown to be factual. In fact, I have shown, in my contribution to Henry Bauer's book, that the actual number of sightings, hoaxes and identified misinterpretations included, is about 800 (now about 900, it being 8 years after I wrote my original list). ABC, Madrid, Spain, July 15, p. 76, said the last thorough study of the loch had been performed in 1903 by Sir John Murray. The Süddeutsche Zeitung, August 1, p.11, summarized the results of the search. The 4-million-pounds project collected many data on the fauna and flora of the loch, but, as Kaare Steel Groos, project manager, summed up: "We were only able to survey one small sector of the loch after the other, so there is plenty of room left for the mysterious Nessie". Though the fact remains that each year, there are more sophisticated searches of the Loch and for its monster, to no avail. The simplest solution to these results is that there is no monster, as hurtful as it may seem. The Süddeutsche points out that in naming the project Urquhart, having Nessie-famed Nik Witchell holding press conferences in Fort Augustus Abbey and informing the journalists in the Loch Ness Monster Exhibition, the research project identified itself with the monster, even though they constantly pointed out they were not interested in it - which led to the situation that the journalists expected monster news and were not interested in the real results of the project, nematode worms, environmental pollution, death survey, etc. In keeping with this nonsense approach is the rest of the Süddeutsche article, which pokes fun at the monster and presents some of the silly-season-hoaxes of the last decade as fresh news.

- Bibliography: A raging controversy between Nessie believers and sceptics was published in the Highland News, July 18, August 1 and July 25 (credit: Andreas Rottmann). Once again, silly sceptics suggest Nessie is the result of drunken monks' imagination...// A monument to Elsbeth, the hippopotamus which escaped and lived wild at Fürth in the summer of 1990 (see Bilk 38), was erected in July (Rheinpfalz, July 11).// Giant pike attacks a dog at a lake at Meppel, Netherlands (Mannheimer Morgen, June 13, p.12)// INFO Journal 66, p.28 L Okanagan monster, p.30 Siberian Lake Monster//

ISIS

- Jack Arnold, creator of the "monster from the Black Lagoon" died in spring 1992. I have the clipping, but can't find it right now.
- In a new book on UFOs by MUFON Germany, author Illobrand von Ludwiger ("Der Stand der UFO Forschung", 2001 Verlag) publishes a picture of a ufonaut seen at Langenargen (see my article in FT 63, p.43). In this version, 15 years after the event, the round head has been replaced by a more human one, modelled closely after the alien head drawn by Betty Hill. Obviously, this alteration was not made by the witness, but by ufologist von Brand! He then compares this manipulated version of the creature with the Hopkins alien and finds they are identical! This is how "scientific ufologists" fake and destroy evidence - and it is them who talk about conspiracies to hide the truth!

LEVIATHAN

- A friend of mine, Heino Ehlers, told me he read in the "Hamburger Abendblatt", either on Aug 1 or Aug 8, about a large creature observed in the German north Sea. I still try to trace this clipping. It may only have been a shark.

KRAKEN

- The German tabloid Bild (Aug 12, p.2) had a short article headlined "Encounter with a giant Kraken". "Close Encounter off British Columbia, Canada. Skin diver Renate Reith puts her hand on one of the rare giant octopi. The little-known creatures reach a diameter of 10 m and a weight of 30 cw."

USO

- Earthlights over lakes may have natural explanation: INFO 66, p.30 ; p.40: light over sea. ● Science Frontiers 82, p.3: submarine light wheel, p.4: earth light theory connected to water.